

CONTEMPORARY PRAISE BUILDING THE ONE-WORLD CHURCH

July 23, 2013 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

The greatest danger in dabbling with contemporary praise music is the fact that it is a bridge to the end-time one-world “church.” We have documented this extensively in *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Music*, which is available as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org. The following is excerpted from this directory:

The Canadian born Matt Maher (b. 1974), who lives in Tempe, Arizona, is a popular contemporary worship musician. As of 2011, he is an eight-time GMA Dove Award Nominee. He has a degree in Jazz Piano from Arizona State University.

Like John Michael Talbot, Maher is a Roman Catholic ecumenical bridge builder.

He grew up Catholic but didn’t take it seriously until he had a “profound awakening” through a charismatic Catholic group. This consisted of an emotional experience that he had while watching a skit “The Broken Heart,” about a girl who gets a new heart from God after giving hers away to a young boy.

“I was standing in the back of the room and I burst into tears,” Maher remembered. Not long after, he started writing worship songs for the group’s prayer sessions and devoted himself to performing Christian music” (“Catholic Rocker Matt Maher,” Religion News Service, May 17, 2013).

The skit did not present the biblical gospel and Maher’s conversion was not a biblical conversion. It was a religious conversion that did not include repentance from error and rejection of Rome’s false christ and false gospel.

Maher’s wife is Methodist, but they are raising their son “in the Catholic Church,” while also taking him to Methodist services “so he can experience both traditions” (Religion News Service, May 17, 2013).

This is the perfect recipe for the building of the end-time, one-world “church.”

Maher ministers at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Tempe, which is devoted to Mary as the Queen of Heaven. The sign at the front of the church says, “Mary, Mother of Life, pray for us.” Maher is on the board of directors for the Catholic youth organization Life Teen.

He calls himself a “musical missionary,” a missionary for Rome, that is. *Christianity Today* says “Maher is bringing his music--and a dream of unity into the Protestant church” (“Common Bonds,” CT, Oct. 27, 2009). He says, “I’ve had co-writing sessions with Protestants where we

had that common denominator, and I've seen in a very radical way the real possibility of unity." He says, "I look at it like the Catholic church is my immediate family, and all my friends from different denominations are extended family."

David Wang says Maher is "one of the most successful Catholic artists to cross over into mainstream Christian rock and find an audience among evangelicals" ("Catholic Rocker Matt Maher," Religion News Service, May 17, 2013).

Maher says, "The arms of St. Peter's are really big" (Religion News Service, May 17, 2013).

Maher, who tours with non-Catholics, comments:

"What's fantastic about it is we're all Christians from different denominations and we're learning to understand each other. It just means that we're writing about mysteries that we don't fully understand."

Maher is happy that other Catholic musicians are coming into the forefront of the contemporary praise movement, such as Audrey Assad who signed with Sparrow Records, and producer Robbie Seay.

Leaving the Catholic Church is not an option for Maher, because he says, "I love my faith and the expression of it." He intends, rather, for his music to be "a bridge." He says that contemporary worship music is a way to "build relationships with people and link arms with them for the Kingdom."

He says that touring with people like Michael W. Smith is producing ecumenical unity, because people come to the concerts and find themselves standing beside a priest or nun and they learn that "we're all in this family together."

What kingdom, though? There is the kingdom truth and light and the kingdom of heresy and darkness. The New Testament frequently warns of a great apostasy before the return of Christ. These warnings began to be delivered through with the ministry of Christ Himself (Mat. 7:15-23; 24:4-5, 11, 24) and were completed through the ministries of the apostles and prophets (e.g., 1 Timothy 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2; Jude). The apostles warned that there will be false christs, false gospels, and false spirits, and taught the churches to be perpetually on guard, testing everything by the absolute standard of God's Word (Acts 17:11; 20:28-31; 2 Corinthians 11:4; 1 Thess. 5:21; Heb. 5:12-14). They warned that false teachers would be deceptive, appearing as wolves in sheep's clothing and as ministers of righteousness (Mat. 7:15; 2 Cor. 11:13-15). They warned about the cunning craftiness of false teachers (Eph. 4:14) and their ability to deceive through "good words and fair speeches" (Rom. 16:17-18).

These warnings are typically ignored throughout the world of Contemporary Christian Music, and those who take the warnings seriously are dismissed as unloving judgmental Pharisees or worse.

Maher hosts the ecumenical WorshipTogether's New Song Cafe.

He performs with a wide variety of "evangelical" Contemporary Christian musicians. He is in the Provident Label Group with Michael W. Smith, Third Day, Jars of Clay, and others. He has written hit songs for "evangelical artists" such as Chris Tomlin ("Your Grace Is Enough"), Bethany Dillon, and Phillips, Craig and Dean.

Maher sings of Christ and the resurrection and grace, but these terms must be interpreted in light of Rome's heresies. Salvation by grace, according to Rome, is salvation through the sacraments. Christ is idolatrously worshipped in the consecrated wafer of the mass. Christ's resurrection did not complete the believer's salvation; it provided the storehouse of grace to the Catholic Church to distribute through its sacraments, particularly baptism and the mass and confession to a priest.

Maher told *Christianity Today* that those who criticize his relationship with the Catholic Church are misinformed and "mis-taught" and they "have a bad understanding of Catholic teaching," but that is not true for me. I have studied the writings and history of the Catholic Church extensively. If Maher thinks that the Roman Church teaches salvation by grace alone through the blood of Christ alone without works, he is deceived by the ecumenical program which was launched at Vatican II and which has been effective in creating the end-time one-world church.

At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the declarations of which are still in force, the Roman Catholic Church formally condemned the biblical gospel of salvation through by grace alone through faith alone. Consider the following declarations of Trent:

"If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12).

"If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA" (Sixth Session, Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 24).

In its most formal and authoritative statements since Trent, Rome has continued to deny that salvation is by grace alone through Christ's atonement alone through faith alone without works or sacraments. Consider the following statements of the authoritative Vatican II Council of the mid-1960s, called by Pope John Paul XXIII and attended by more than 2,400 Catholic bishops—

"For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, 'the work of our redemption is accomplished,' and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church" (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Introduction, para. 2).

"As often as the sacrifice of the cross by which 'Christ our Pasch is sacrificed' (1 Cor. 5:7) is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out" (Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter 1, 3, p. 324).

“... [Christ] also willed that the work of salvation which they preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical [ritualistic] life revolves. Thus by Baptism men are grafted into the paschal mystery of Christ. ... They receive the spirit of adoption as sons” (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Chap. 1, I, 5,6, pp. 23-24).

“From the most ancient times in the Church good works were also offered to God for the salvation of sinners, particularly the works which human weakness finds hard. Because the sufferings of the martyrs for the faith and for God's law were thought to be very valuable, penitents used to turn to the martyrs to be helped by their merits to obtain a more speedy reconciliation from the bishops. Indeed, the prayers and good works of holy people were regarded as of such great value that it could be asserted that the penitent was washed, cleansed and redeemed with the help of the entire Christian people” (Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences, chap. 3, 6, pp. 78,79).

Rome's gospel is a heretical combination of faith plus works, grace plus sacraments, Christ plus the church. It redefines grace to include works. It confuses justification with sanctification. It confuses imputation with impartation. It views justification not as a once-for-all legal declaration whereby the sinner is declared righteous before God and is granted eternal life as the unmerited gift of God, but rather as a PROCESS whereby the sinner is gradually saved through participation in the sacraments. There is no eternal security in the Roman gospel because salvation allegedly depends partially upon man's works. According to Roman Catholic theology, Christ purchased salvation and gave it to the Catholic Church to be distributed to men through its sacraments. This is not only a false gospel, it is a blasphemous usurpation of Christ's position as only Lord and Saviour and Mediator.

Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia, published in 1991, defines justification as “THE PROCESS by which a sinner is made righteous, pure and holy before God.”

“Justification in the Catholic Tradition comes about by means of faith in Christ, AND in a life of good works lived in response to God's invitation to believe. ... That works are clearly required in the New Testament for union with Christ is seen in the many parables such as the Good Samaritan, Lazarus and Dives, and others” (emphasis added).

Therefore, when committed Roman Catholics like Matt Maher and John Michael Talbot sing of Christ's grace, they don't mean what the Bible means. They are using a Roman Catholic theological dictionary, but because of the widespread ignorance that exists in “evangelical” and even “fundamentalist” churches people are deceived by the language.

If a Roman Catholic does not accept what the Catholic Church teaches, he or she should leave and stop pretending to be both a Catholic and a believer that salvation is by Christ's grace alone without works.

(See “How Rome Denies Salvation by Grace Alone” at the Way of Life Literature web site -- www.wayoflife.org.)

Maher led worship for Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the Rally for Youth in April 2008.

In the Fall of 2009 Maher traveled with Michael W. Smith on the New Hallelujah Tour.

In the Fall of 2010, he was a guest singer at the David Crowder Band's Fantastical Church Music Conference at Baylor University.

In early 2011 Maher toured on the Rock and Worship Roadshow headlined by MercyMe.

In July 2012, Maher sang "Hold Us Together," the ecumenical theme song for Mormon Glenn Beck's Restoring Love conference in Dallas, Texas.

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